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Polish agent deaths 'behind Agee order'

By LINDSAY MACKIE

Mr Philip Agee, the former CIA agent whose appeal against deportation opens tomorrow, said yesterday that the British Government appeared to believe that he was responsible for the deaths of two men working in Poland for Western intelligence. He denied that his exposure of CIA activities has led to the deaths.

Speaking after a march through London and a rally in Hyde Park organised in support of himself and Mr Mark Hosenball, an American journalist who was also served last November with a deportation order, Mr Agee said that he believed the story to be one which the CIA had tried to pin on him last year. He had denied it then.

But yesterday he said that recently "from a second-hand second-hand source" he had heard that Mr Merlyn Rees, the Home Secretary, had told Mr David Steel that he (Mr Agee) was responsible for the deaths of two men in Poland last year. The Liberal leader had asked Mr Rees why deportation orders had been served on the two men. Mr Steel, who is on holiday, could not be contacted last night.

Last January a staff reporter on the Los Angeles Times wrote a story naming Mr Agee as the source which enabled Polish intelligence to break a Western spy ring operating in Poland. Mr Agee denied the story at the time and reiterated this denial yesterday.

The Los Angeles Times reporter said that Mr Agee had given the name of a key Western agent to the KGB in 1971 when he was in Cuba. The agent was named by the reporter as Colonel Jerzy Pawlowski, the Polish sabre fencing

champion who won a gold medal in the 1968 Mexico Olympics.

Last April Colonel Pawlowski was sentenced to 25 years imprisonment in Poland after having been convicted of being a French spy. He is said to have given to Polish intelligence, under interrogation, the names of 120 people working for NATO intelligence in Poland. The Los Angeles Times did not use the story last year.

Mr Agee said yesterday that he had never, while working for the CIA, been involved in joint security operations with British intelligence and never knew of any British security operations anywhere. The only link between himself and Colonel Pawlowski had been that they were both at the Mexico Olympics at the same time, when Mr Agee was working as an undercover agent at the US Embassy in Mexico.

But Mr Agee said that he would never have been chosen to inform Pawlowski by the CIA as he was at the time well known to hundreds of people in Mexico City as being an American Embassy man.

Furthermore, Mr Agee said, if he had, as alleged, given Colonel Pawlowski's name to the KGB in Cuba in 1971, it was strange that the spy ring had not been broken until 1975 in Poland. Mr Agee believes that the story has been planted and encouraged by the CIA.

Speakers at the rally yesterday, which was organised by the Philip Agee and Mark Hosenball Defence Committee, included Mrs Judith Hart, Labour MP for Lanark, and Miss Jo Richardson, Labour MP for Barking. Mrs Hart said that Mr Agee "should be honoured for his exposure of CIA activities."

Mr Ken Morgan, general secretary of the National Union of

Journalists, told the rally that it was "intolerable" that the union, which had often protested on behalf of foreign journalists to foreign governments which had used similar procedures, now found itself protesting to the British Government about the double standard applying to British and foreign journalists.

British journalists had the right to trial but foreign journalists could simply be deported under the excuse of national security. He demanded the dropping of the charges against Mr Agee and Mr Hosenball, and the right to a trial, if the Government had charges against the two men.

The appeal procedure, which begins tomorrow, is expected to last for two days. The appeal is being heard by the "three wise men" on the Home Secretary's advisory panel. The hearing will take place at 116 Pall Mall, the former home of the United Services and Royal Aeronautical Club.

Mr Agee will give his deposition first and that is expected to take up most of the day tomorrow.

Mr Agee said yesterday that he had prepared around 500,000 words in his defence because he had had to cover everything which might be included in the general charges against him. The Home Office charges are that he maintained regular contact with foreign intelligence agents, was involved in disseminating information harmful to British security and that he aided and counselled others in obtaining information for publication which could harm British security.

Mr Hosenball's appeal is to be heard on January 19. He is now a reporter on the London Evening Standard and formerly worked for the magazine 'Time Out'.